

NOVEMBER 25, 1976

THE MIDDLE EAST POT SIMMERS

ANNCR: NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN EXAMINES PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

VOICE: THE PROSPECTS FOR A STABLE MIDDLE EAST PEACE, AS SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER SAID RECENTLY, HAVE NEVER BEEN SO GOOD.

AT THE HEART OF THE IMPROVED PICTURE FOR NEW NEGOTIATING EFFORTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS THE PRECARIOUS PEACE IN LEBANON WHICH DAILY SEEMS TO BECOME MORE PERMANENT. THE MAJOR CREDIT GOES TO THE ARAB LEAGUE PEACE-KEEPING FORCE WHICH SO FAR SEEMS TO BE ABLE TO IMPOSE AT LEAST A TRUCE BETWEEN THE PREVIOUSLY WARRING FACTIONS.

SO FAR, THE PEACE-KEEPING FORCE HAS CONDUCTED ITS OPERATIONS WITH RESTRAINT AND DISCIPLINE. AND ITS COMMANDERS SEEM TO BE DOING ALL THEY CAN TO ALLAY ISRAEL'S FEARS THAT THE PRESENCE OF LARGE CONTINGENTS OF SYRIAN TROOPS IN LEBANON MAY INTRODUCE A NEW ELEMENT OF INSTABILITY IN THE REGION.

THE ISRAELI CONCERN CENTERS ON THE POSSIBILITY THAT SYRIAN UNITS OF THE PEACE-KEEPING FORCE MAY BE STATIONED IN SOUTHERN LEBANON CLOSE TO ISRAEL'S BORDERS. TEL AVIV HAS WARNED DAMASCUS REPEATEDLY IN RECENT DAYS THAT IT WILL NOT TOLERATE THE PRESENCE OF SYRIAN TROOPS CLOSE TO ITS BORDERS WITH LEBANON. AT THE SAME TIME, ISRAEL HAS SAID IT WILL HOLD SYRIA RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY PALESTINIAN GUERRILLA ATTACKS ALONG THOSE BORDERS.

TO ARAB AND OTHER EARS, THIS POSITION SEEMS CONTRADICTORY -- FOR HOW COULD SYRIAN TROOPS BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES IN AREAS WHERE THEY ARE NOT STATIONED AS A PEACE-KEEPING FORCE? BUT THAT RHETORICAL QUESTION ASIDE, ISRAEL'S FEARS ARE SOLIDLY FOUNDED ON THE TRAGIC EVENTS IT

HAS EXPERIENCED THROUGH SYRIA'S SUPPORT IN THE PAST FOR PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS OPERATING ALONG THE LEBANESE BORDERS.

IT IS ENCOURAGING, HOWEVER, THAT BOTH ISRAEL AND THE ARAB LEAGUE PEACE-KEEPING FORCE HAVE SHOWN THEMSELVES SENTITIVE TO THE DANGERS INVOLVED IN THE STATIONING OF SYRIAN TROOPS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. REPORTS FROM BEIRUT WEDNESDAY SAY THE PEACE-KEEPING FORCE WILL BE SENDING SMALL CONTINGENTS OF NON-SYRIAN ARAB TROOPS INTO THAT AREA--SPECIFICALLY THE PORT OF TYRE. AND ISRAEL'S STATE RADIO SAID WEDNESDAY THAT TEL AVIV HAS SUGGESTED THE CREATION OF A BUFFER ZONE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON SIMILAR TO THE ONES SEPARATING ISRAEL FROM EGYPT AND SYRIA IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE YOM KIPPUR WAR.

SUCH A PROPOSAL, OF COURSE, IMPLIES A WIDENING OF THE MANDATE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE. THAT FORCE IS STATIONED IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SYRIA AND ITS MANDATE IS BEING RENEWED FOR ANOTHER SIX MONTHS BY THE U.N. BOTH ISRAEL AND SYRIA HAVE ALREADY INDICATED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SEE THE MANDATE RENEWED.

IN URGING THE RENEWAL, U.N. SECRETARY-GENERAL WALDHEIM RE-EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR NEW EFFORTS TO RESUME THE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATING PROCESS. THE SITUATION, HE SAID, WILL REMAIN UNSTABLE AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS UNLESS REAL HEADWAY TOWARD A JUST AND LASTING SETTLEMENT CAN BE MADE.

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS AFFECTING THE SITUATION ON THE LEBANESE-ISRAELI BORDERS ADDS DRAMATIC EMPHASIS TO DOCTOR WALDHEIM'S WORDS. AND THOSE EVENTS IMPART AT LEAST SOME URGENCY TO WASHINGTON'S URGINGS FOR RESTRAINT BY ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.